I. *An Account of an* antient Shrine, *formerly belonging to the Abbey of* Croyland; *by* Wm. Stukely *M. D. Coll. Med. Lond. Soc. & Eccleſ. D.* Georgii *Martyr.* Lond. *Rector.*

Read Dec. 8. 1748. THE Shrine before us is a great Curioſity. Few of this kind of Antiquities eſcap'd the general Ravage of the Diſſolution of Abbeys: For which Reaſon I thought it would be an agreeable Amuſement to the *Society* to have a View of it; and to preſerve a Drawing of it as in TAB. I. and II. The Shrine is made of Oak, plated over with Copper, upon which the Figures are chaced in Gold: The Ground is enamel'd with blue; in the Ridge along the Top are three oval Chryſtals ſet tranſparently; its Dimenſions are as expreſſed under the Print.

Mr. *Eayre* of St. *Neots* ſent it to me to have my Opinion of it. It was found in the Houſe of a Gentleman of that Neighbourhood, who never ſhew'd it during his Life-time; and who poſſibly might have given us ſome Account, as to the Hiſtory of it; and at preſent we have no means left of finding it out, but by Conjecture.

I conceive it came from *Croyland-Abbey*. There was an Intercourſe between this Abbey and St. *Neot*'s Priory; inſomuch that St. *Neot*'s Body was carried hence to *Croyland-Abbey*, and inſhrined there.

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Theſe Shrines were made for receiving Reliques of Saints, in old Abbeys, Churches, and Cathedrals. (See a Print in the Hiſtory of *Canterbury*, and in *Dugdale's Monaſticon*, of the high Altar of the Church of St. *Auguſtin* there; no leſs than thirteen of theſe Shrines ſtanding around). Theſe were carried about in Proceſſions on their anniverſary Days; ſometimes embelliſhed with Jewels of ineſtimable Value. Beſides theſe portable ones, there were others, built of Stone, Marble, and other Materials; like that of St. *Edward* the *Confeſſor* in *Weſtminſter-Abbey*; one now in *Cheſter* Cathedral of St. *Werburga*, whereon the epiſcopal Throne is ſet, adorn'd with Sculptures of *Saxon* Kings and Saints: One of St. *Thomas de Cantelupe* Biſhop of *Hereford*, in that Cathedral. Theſe now remain. There was one in the Church of *Burton-Coggles*, *Lincolnſhire*; and of *Heckington* in the ſame County; and innumerable others, deſtroy'd at the Diſſolution of Monaſteries.

The Shrine before us, from the Manner of drawing, and Workmanſhip, I conclude to be of *Saxon* Antiquity, and that very high; now near 900 Years old. I think it gives us the Story of the Murder of the Abbot there, and his Monks, perpetrated by the barbarous *Danes*, in the Year 870.

Sept. 25. that Year, they ruſh'd into the Church of *Croyland*, whilſt the Religious were at divine Service. *Ingulphus*, Abbot of the Place, in his Hiſtory, gives us this Account. Lord *Theodore* was then Abbot of *Croyland*; who at that time pontifically officiated at the high Altar, expecting the Barbarians. King *Osketyl* cut off his Head upon the Altar. *Verus Martyr et Chriſti hoſtia immolatur*, ſays

ſays our Author, *Miniſtri circumſtantes omnes capitibus detruncati*: "Thus fell the true Martyr and "Lamb of Chriſt, as a Sacrifice on the Altar. All "the aſſiſtant Miniſters were beheaded likewiſe," ſays he.

The two on our Shrine are Frier *Elfget* the Deacon, and Frier *Savin* the Subdeacon.

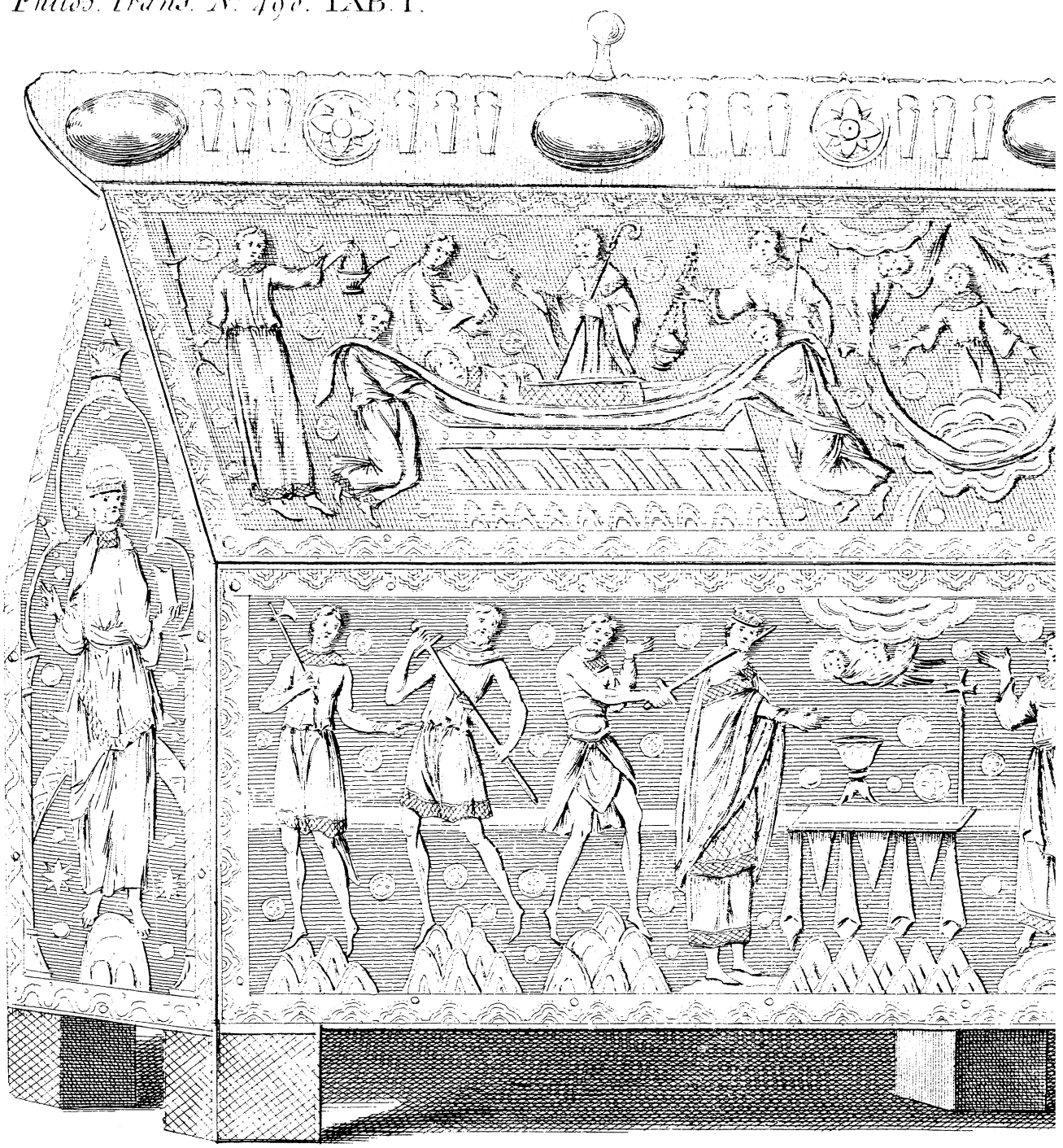
Some Days after, when the Monks that fled returned, they found the Body of the venerable Abbot *Theodore* beheaded at the Altar.

Above is repreſented his Succeſſor Abbot *Godric*, with the Miniſters about him, putting the deceaſed Abbot into his Shroud; whilſt Angels are carrying his Soul up to Heaven.

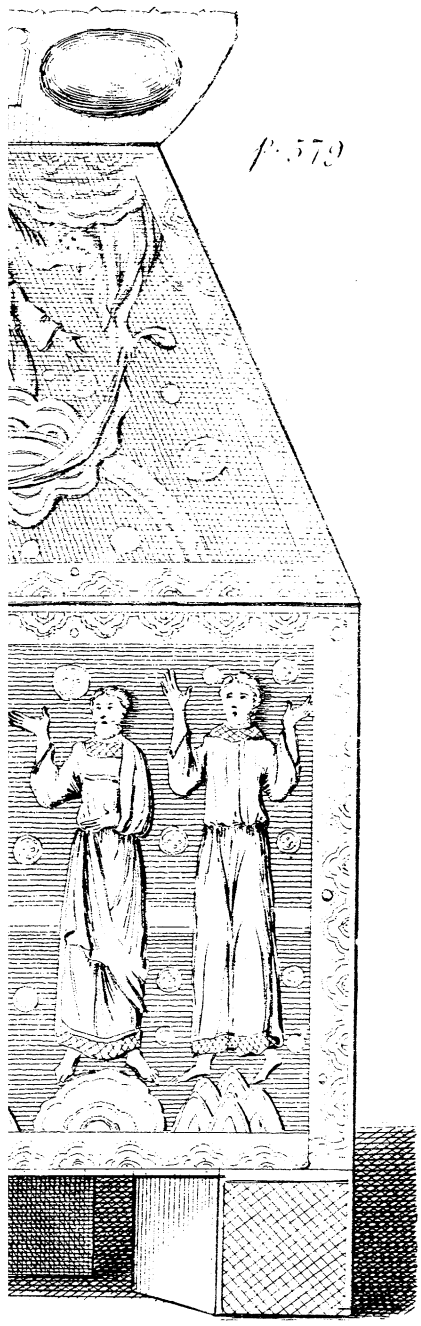
I ſuppoſe ſome Part of this Martyr might be obtained, and kept in this Shrine.

I obſerve the famous old ſepulcral Stone in *Peterborough* Minſter-Yard, is exactly of the ſame Shape as our Shrine. It was ſet up over the Grave of the Abbot and Monks murder'd by the ſame *Danes*, the Day after thoſe of *Croyland-Abbey* ſuffer'd, *Sept.* 26. It is carv'd on the Sides with the Images of our Saviour and the Apoſtles. It is now remov'd into the Library.

Nov. 23. 1748. W. Stukely.



A most antient Shrine, of curious enamel'd work, on Copper; i
12 inches long 10½ high 4¾ broad.



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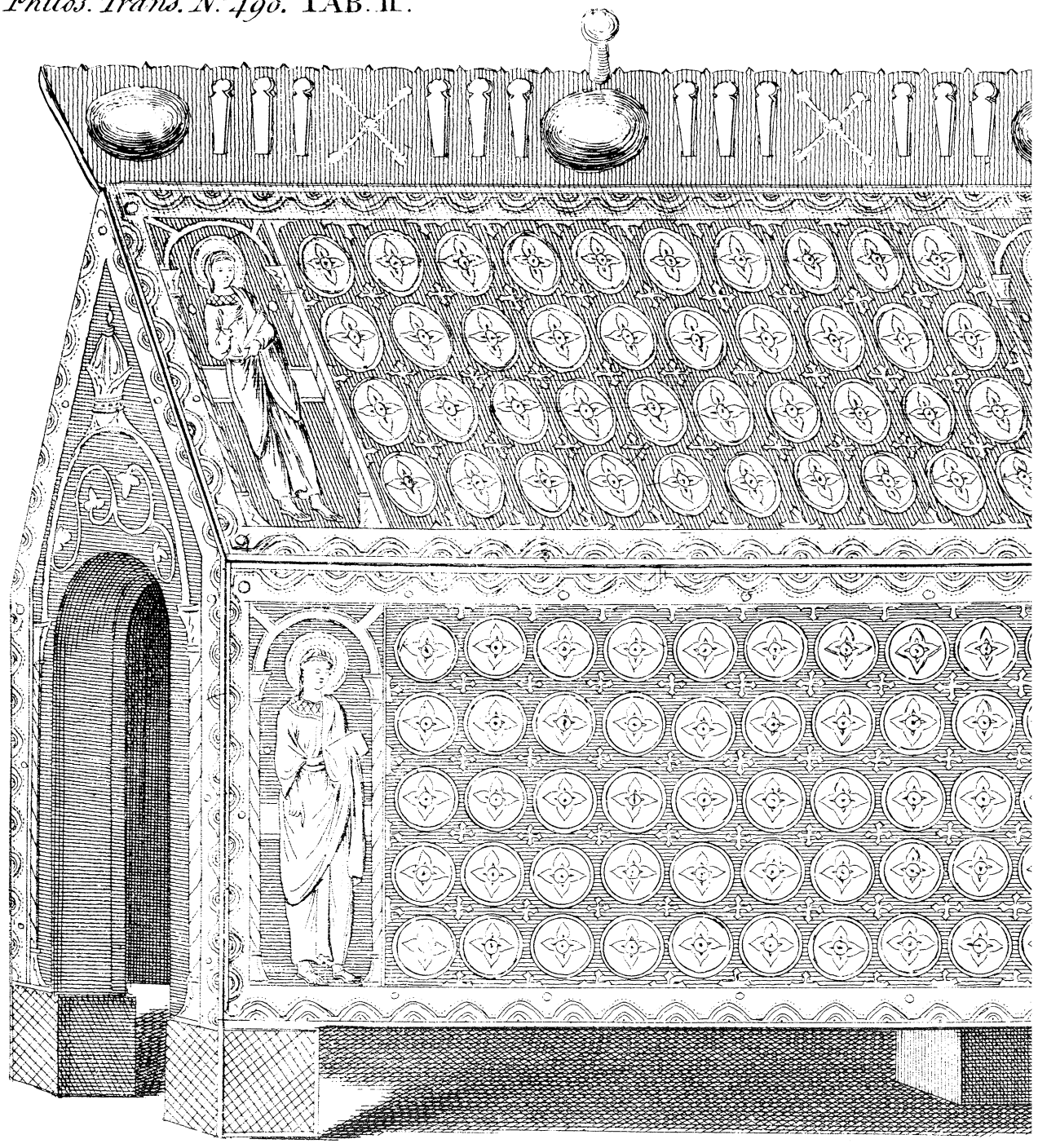
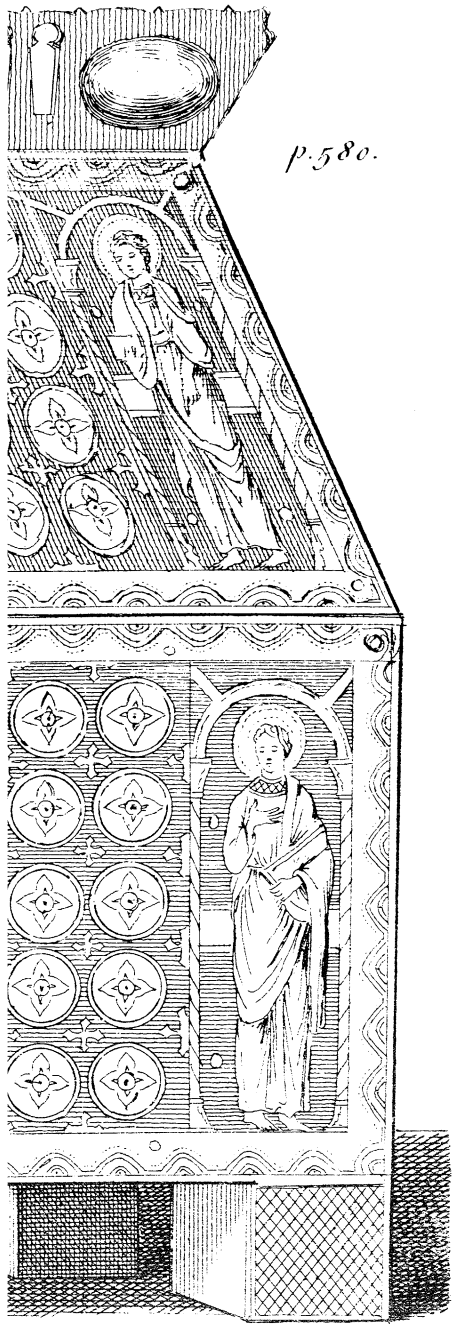
ver, in Colours.



The Backside of the Shrine. This elegant Antiquity is in Posse
Sr John Cotton Baronet. 1748.



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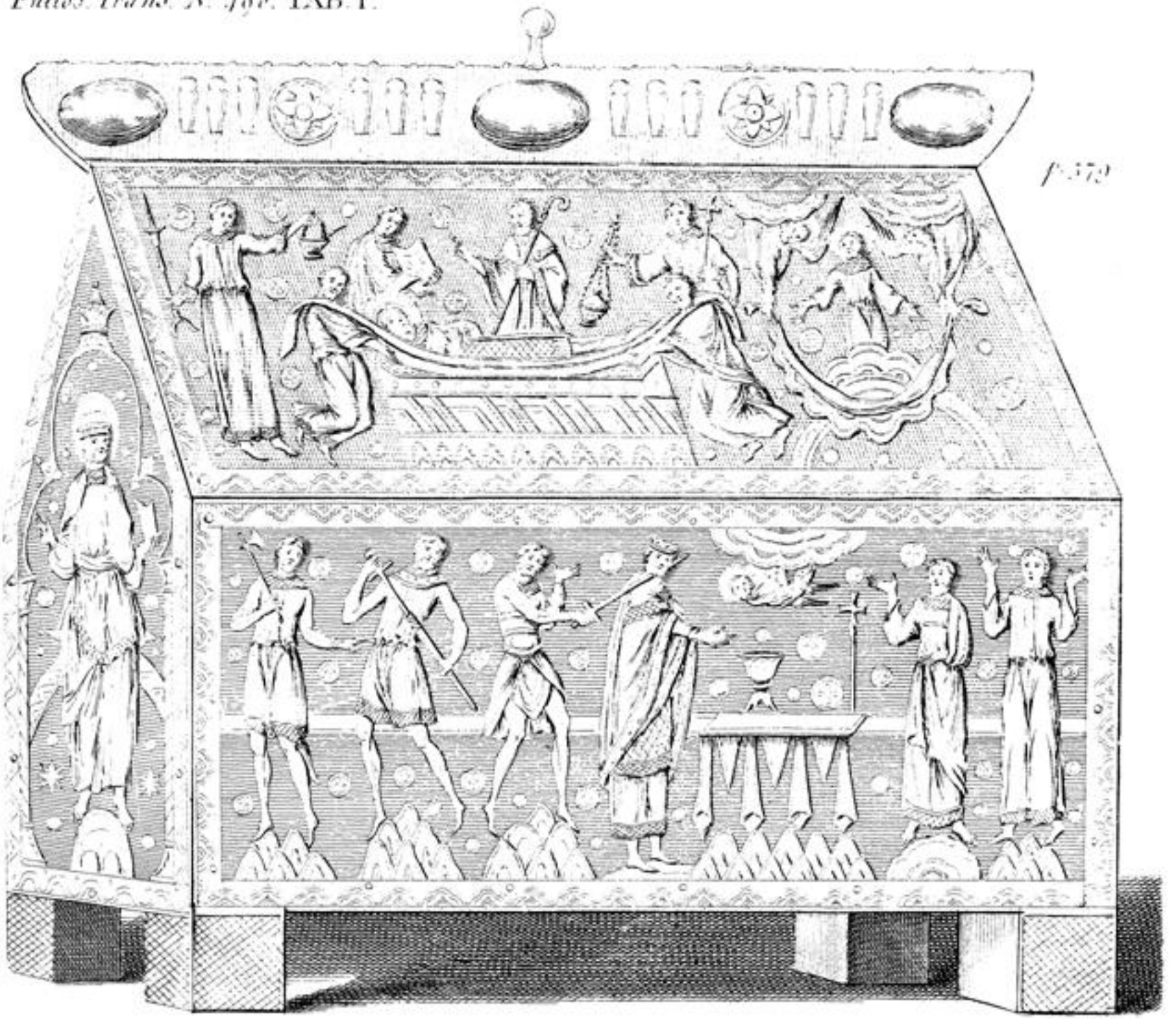

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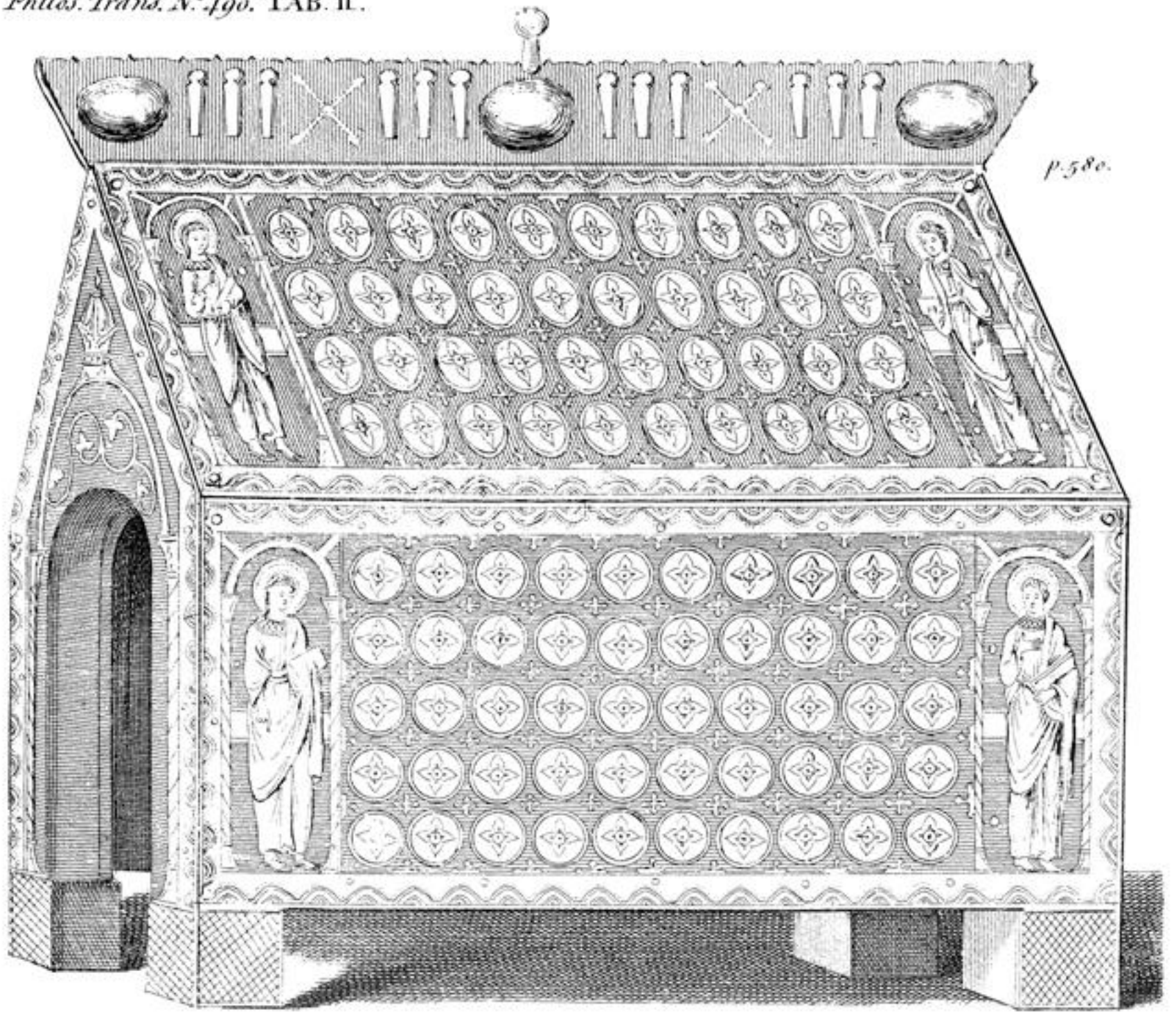

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